

FRENCH ELECTION RESULTS

- I. In metropolitan France, Communists got 5,426,803 votes on 2 Jan--415,552 more than '51 elections.
  - A. This was 25.6% of total vote. However, because '56 elections brought more voters to polls, percentage of popular vote won by Commies was 0.9% less than '51.
  - B. Vote won Commies 145 metropolitan seats. Also got at least 5 from overseas, for seat increase of 52 over 1951 strength.
- II. Broader application proportional representation responsible for increase in Communist representation:
  - A. 1951 law, designed to favor center parties at expense extremists, permitted "affiliation" of party lists--giving all seats in election district to coalition winning majority of popular vote.

State Department review  
completed

1. In '51 election, center parties

formed numerous broad alliances,  
won majority in 38 departments  
(map).

B. In '56, center was split between  
Republican Front and Faure Coalition:  
in consequence, "affiliations" were  
both more numerous and greatly re-  
stricted in scope--as result, won  
majorities in only 10 districts.

1. In remaining districts, therefore,  
proportional representation brought  
into play, giving Communists addi-  
tional seats.

III. Increase in Commie strength was anticipated,  
but real surprise was unexpected success  
of Poujade movement at polls.

A. Poujadiste candidates got 2.4 million  
popular vote (for 11% of total): pre-  
vious French Gov't prediction was per-  
haps 1.5 million votes.

B. Captured 52 Assembly seats: maximum

pre-election guess was 15.

C. Yet Poujade movement's electoral campaign was marked by negativism: although movement has spelled out a program, Poujadistes made little effort to present platform to voters.

1. Instead, thumped for convening of "States General" (shades of 1789) to listen to "peoples' grievances."

IV. Background of Poujade movement, itself, reveals little reason for such success at polls: leader is 35-year-old stationer from Saint Cere, in southwest France, who is said to have been Doriot "Fascist" in youth, was later a Gaullist and WW II Resistance member.

A. Poujade captured imaginations of petty merchants (small, self-employed shopkeepers, artisans, who are marginal economic group but fiercely proud of

tax laws which, when actually enforced, put special squeeze on this group.

B. By March '55, Poujade claimed 800,000 followers, a warchest of over \$1 million a year in dues.

C. At that time, not only delayed Premier Faure's attempts to get special powers for revision of taxes, but actually forced government to capitulate, change laws.

D. However, in Apr '55 local elections, Poujadistes were soundly beaten at polls

V. Poujadiste "surprise" in Jan elections, therefore, was broad spread between voting strength of movement itself and total popular vote it won (roughly, margin of million votes).

A. This added strength mostly attributable to floating "protest" vote previously given Gaullist bloc.

B. These "protest" voters unwilling to

vote Communist, but nonetheless resentful of instability, chaotic qualities of French Gov't.

C. Also sympathetic with Poujade's violently-expressed anti-parliamentary attitude (viz: his characterization of Assembly as France's "biggest bordello").

D. Bitter over national "shame" of Indochina, North Africa, "protest" voters also attracted by ultra-nationalistic elements of Poujadism.

VI. Although Communists and Poujadists together control only about same proportion of Assembly seats as Communists and Gaullists did in '51, increased dissension among center groups makes stable French government unlikely.

A. Intransigence of Mollet and Mendes-France vis-vis the right-center increases possibility of Communist influence.

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B. Mendes-Mollet insistence on a "Republican

can Front" government raises possibility of reliance on Communist support, at least for domestic policy.

1. Actual Communist participation in government nonetheless very unlikely.

C. Pro-Atlantic orientation will probably be maintained.

1. Pro-West majority still exists.

VII. As ~~for~~ future of Poujadiste Deputies, they represent many shades of political conviction.

A. Meeting scheduled for 14 Jan to define their program for new Assembly.

B. Unless Poujade can maintain tight "party discipline," chances are that movement will eventually splinter, as did Gaullists.

C. In any case, quite possible that early Assembly sessions will be marred by Poujadiste rowdyism.

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**BRITAIN AND THE MIDDLE EAST**

I. Latest Jordan rioting (7-10 Jan) is further evidence continued decline both in influence of British and in influence Britain's traditional Middle East allies.

A. UK-nurtured Jordanian politicians of old stamp clearly helpless in face of organized violence.

B. Latest Jordanian cabinet--although made up of old pros--back-pedaling on Baghdad pact.

1. New Prime Minister Rifai, longtime Saudi beneficiary, has announced he will join no pacts: new Foreign Minister Khalidi reportedly favors Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi alignment.

C. Nonetheless doubtful whether any such collection of old line politicians will appease Jordanian extremists.

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D. Together with other hotheads, Commies

will probably continue demand new elections.

1. If free elections held in next few months, new parliament would probably be even more anti-"old guard" than present one.
2. If elections rigged, action would probably be death blow to prestige of monarchy and present ruling class.

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II. Ferment basically similar to that in Jordan also at work in Syria: over last two years, new men, of extremist nationalist leanings, have achieved position in Syria where little more needed to give them overt control.

A. These elements most evident in army, where outright Commies are few, but many left-wing junior officers are willing follow parallel course advocated such leaders as Hawrani (Arab Socialist chief).

B. Syrian situation confused, loaded with internal and foreign intrigues. So far, however, anti-Iraqi faction appears to be ahead.

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III. Setback in Jordan and trend in Syria both  
increasing pressure on isolated Iraq--only  
Arab state still clearly tied to West (by  
Baghdad Pact).

A. Iraqis feeling strong pull to return to  
fold of extreme Arab nationalism, even  
if this means accepting Egyptian leader-  
ship for present.

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B. Any development neutralist trend in

Iraq is very serious matter for British,

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UPDATE—MUSCAT AND OMAN

I. British-led operation against dissident imam of inner Oman apparently ended about 18 Dec. Muscat communique of 19 Dec stated:

- A. Imam had fled his capital for own family village.
- B. Muscat forces would not follow up "because of Sultan's reluctance disturb loyal sections of iman's tribe and family"

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III. US Emb Jidda believes it significant that as of 5 Jan no mention of Oman troubles made by Saudi press or radio, though numerous references in other Arab pappers circulating freely in Jidda.

- A. Embassy guesses Saudis fear public comment would heighten pressure on king Saud to take direct action in Buraimi dispute; thinks Saudis prefer have Oman problem

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NSC BRIEFING

11 January 1956

EAST GERMAN UNREST

I.

the regime continues to live in fear of a repetition of the bloody 17 June 1953 riots.

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A. Present unrest apparently results both from continued East German food shortages and from such repressive and unpopular policies of the regime as wage cuts and "voluntary" enlistment in the army.

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IV. East German regime faces dilemma in dealing with such unrest.

A. Communists hesitate to take harsh repressive action for fear of adverse effects on West German opinion.

B. Thus, we expect increasing unrest this winter, as food and fuel shortages grow worse.

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1. However, popular uprising on  
scale of 17 June 53 affair is  
unlikely in near future.